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Summary record of the 9th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 15 October 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Argüello ..... (Argentina)
Later: Mr. Cato ..... (Philippines)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 28: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/63/20)

1. **Mr. Cato** (Philippines) reaffirmed his delegation's support for the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), particularly its role in promoting access to space technology and development benefits for States lacking active space programmes. The proposed strategic framework for the programme on the peaceful uses of outer space for the period 2010-2011 (A/63/20, para. 280) was also welcome, as were the ongoing discussions within COPUOS of its future role and activities (para. 288). The proposed new items on its agenda, such as the long-term sustainability of space activities, as well as the non-binding code of conduct for outer space activities proposed by the European Union, underscored the continuing relevance of COPUOS. Its ongoing contribution to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development was also welcome.

2. The United Nations Programme on Space Applications had enabled Philippine scientists to hone their expertise in areas such as remote sensing, Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and water-quality monitoring. The United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) was particularly useful to natural disaster-prone countries such as the Philippines, which was affected by an average of 19 cyclones a year. UN-SPIDER would complement domestic efforts to strengthen the forecasting capabilities through the acquisition of modern equipment and land- and space-based technologies, in cooperation with bilateral and regional partners. The Philippines had expressed an interest in hosting a UN-SPIDER regional support office in Manila, a matter currently under discussion with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs in Vienna.

3. In light of extensive explorations of the moon being planned by some States, he wished to appeal to all States to accede to the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies and other relevant international instruments that promoted the peaceful uses of outer space. As part of regional cooperation, the Philippines participated actively in the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum and supported the Sentinel-Asia system. At the domestic level, the National Congress on Space Technology Applications and Research assessed national needs, capabilities and limitations in the area of space technology applications with a view to advancing the Millennium Development Goals, as well as those of the Water Sector Development Strategy and the World Summit on the Information Society. Meanwhile, the Philippine Science and Technology Coordinating Council had undertaken feasibility studies for the development of a small Earth observation satellite which would provide real-time data to help mitigate the impact of natural disasters. It would also be of practical use in agriculture, hydrology, forestry and land mapping.

4. **Mr. Kalinin** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation had long advocated a strengthening of the international legal framework for regulating the peaceful uses of outer space. COPUOS made a vital contribution in coordinating international efforts to that end and its capacities should be reinforced. It was vital that outer space be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. Its militarization threatened the security of mankind and was unacceptable. A draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, submitted by the Russian Federation and China to the Conference on Disarmament, represented a timely and useful initiative that could further international efforts to restrict outer space to peaceful uses.

5. The Russian Federation remained committed to the progressive refinement of space law to reflect current cooperation on space activities. Discussion of the status of ratification of the core United Nations treaties on outer space and of a legally binding instrument that would regulate all activities of mankind in outer space should also continue.

6. **Mr. Kopal** (Czech Republic), speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, said that the report (A/63/20) adequately reflected the wide range of issues discussed within COPUOS and its Subcommittees. He fully supported its recommendations and conclusions. The use of nuclear power sources in outer space had been on the agenda of COPUOS for several years, even though the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/68 of 14 December 1992, had provided for a revision of those principles within two years. The establishment of a Joint Expert Group of the Scientific

and Technical Subcommittee and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was thus welcome, since it was expected to develop an international, scientifically based framework of goals and recommendations for the safety of nuclear power source applications in outer space. If kept properly abreast of proceedings, the Legal Subcommittee could further its own consideration of the legal aspects of the question.

7. The introduction on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee of a new item on a general exchange of information on national mechanisms relating to space debris mitigation measures represented a step in the right direction. He also supported the introduction by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of a new item on the long-term sustainability of space activities (A/63/20, para. 290), as proposed by France. The European initiative in respect of a code of conduct for outer space should not, however, lose sight of the fact that United Nations space treaties already regulated those activities in a legally binding manner. COPUOS and its Subcommittees should focus instead on increasing the number of ratifications.

8. **Mr. Tsuruga** (Japan) said that the Japanese parliament had recently enacted a basic space law covering: the promotion of international cooperation and diplomacy; industry; improvement of quality of life for citizens; national security; the regulation of space activities; and the establishment of a strategic headquarters for space policy. Japan would continue to pursue its space activities in accordance with the pacifist principles of its constitution. It was ready to cooperate with other partners in the development and use of science and technology, including space activities and applications of data collected by Japanese satellites. A lunar orbiting satellite, KAGUYA, that had been launched in 2007, enabled wider coverage of the moon and would enhance international understanding of its origin and evolution. The KIZUNA satellite project, launched recently, would help bridge the digital divide in Asia and the Pacific, while another mobile satellite project supported refugee management and rescue operations. Real-time information delivery had the potential to provide reliable communications not only in disaster situations, but also in areas lacking switching centres, such as mountains and oceans. Japan also planned to launch a Greenhouse gases Observing Satellite (GOSAT) to contribute to the policy debate for the prevention of global warming. Japan had also successfully docked the first two phases of its experiment module Kibo on the International Space Station and two Japanese astronauts were scheduled for long-duration missions. It was to be hoped that Kibo would be widely used by the international scientific community. Japan's human space exploration programme would not be possible without international cooperation.

9. In 2007, Japan and India had jointly organized the fourteenth session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF) in Bangalore, India. Concrete steps had been discussed to enhance international cooperation and support the activities of Sentinel-Asia, which aimed to increase the number of Earth-observation satellites. Japan was also engaged in three cooperative missions with other countries (SUZAKU, HINODE and AKARI), which aimed, inter alia, to map the universe by infrared ray. Data from all three satellites had been released to researchers worldwide. Japan also continued to make significant contributions with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III). The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) had also developed its own space-debris-mitigation standards and Japan would participate actively in the International Heliophysical Year (IHY). It also provided modern astronomical facilities for educational purposes to developing countries. To ensure that all humanity benefited from space activities, international collaborations must be based on a broad and long-term vision.

10. **Mr. Smith** (Fiji) said that the possibility of the militarization of outer space was of real concern to his delegation for it would undermine the collective effort to exploit the common heritage of all mankind only for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all States, irrespective of the stage of their economic or scientific development. Under United Nations leadership, those States with major space capabilities must help prevent an arms race in outer space and encourage international cooperation in its exploration and use.

11. The Fourth Committee should promote greater transparency in the space activities of States, strengthen international cooperation, especially with respect to the safety and security of space assets; and build the capacity of developing countries in particular

to use space-based technology and its applications. Significant social and economic benefits could be derived from using timely, high-quality, space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development in areas such as agriculture, deforestation assessment, drought relief, land management and, indeed, the management of fish and marine resources in the Pacific. One of the reasons often cited for the current food crisis was the lack of access to space-based technologies. A remote sensing capacity would be particularly useful.

12. Capacity-building should go hand in hand with the timely provision of universal, non-discriminatory, affordable open data access and open-source software to developing countries. Thus equipped, they would be able to monitor crops from space, analyse vegetation cover, better manage deforestation, improve fertilizer use, weather and meteorological forecasts and pest control, reduce water wastage and contamination and above all undertake environmental risk analysis — all of which would in turn lead to long-term sustainable food security.

13. **Mr. Gebreel** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, in line with the recommendations of UNISPACE III, his country constantly sought to make use of space applications in order to better manage its natural resources and further its own development. On the international front, his country, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), had recently completed installation of a modern integrated network for monitoring earthquakes in the Mediterranean region.

14. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in addition to being a party to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, would soon also become a party to the following international instruments on outer space: the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space; the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects; and the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

15. It was important to create a mechanism that would regulate the conduct and practices of States in outer space. Such a mechanism should be based on existing principles and legal instruments aimed at ensuring that outer space was used exclusively for peaceful purposes. In that connection, his country supported the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, which had been presented on 12 February 2008 by China and the Russian Federation to the Conference on Disarmament.

16. **Ms. Rodríguez** (Mexico) observed that space science and technology should be used for the general good and for sustainable development, especially in the developing countries. Furthermore, the legal regime governing the use of outer space needed to be developed. All the regional centres for space science and technology education affiliated to the United Nations were basic to strengthening the national and regional capacities of the developing countries. Mexico was currently channelling its work in that area through the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRECTEALC), whose secretariat was situated in the Centre's Mexico campus.

17. Founded more than a decade earlier by Mexico and Brazil, CRECTEALC had flourished owing to the excellent collaboration between the two countries. Mexico and Brazil invited all the Latin American and Caribbean States to take part in the work of the Centre, which had been widely publicized among international space agencies and other regional centres. In addition, the Mexican Senate was currently considering a bill to establish a Mexican space agency, an indication of the importance the country attached to outer space issues. Mexico supported the establishment of a regional space agency.

18. In the current difficult times, Mexico believed that the peaceful use of outer space should focus on international cooperation, especially at the interregional level. It endorsed the direction COPUOS was taking as it aligned its work with the priorities set in the major United Nations meetings and conferences.

19. **Mr. Ng** Chin Huat (Malaysia) said that his Government welcomed the establishment of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG) as a forum for cooperation on matters of mutual interest to its members related to civil satellite-based positioning, navigation, timing and value-added services, compatibility and interoperability of the various satellite systems, and to promote their use to support sustainable development, particularly in developing countries. The Providers Forum that had been established within ICG should enhance the compatibility and interoperability of current and future regional and global navigation satellite systems. Malaysia advocated the strengthening

of international cooperation in disaster management because better early warning systems would prevent loss of life.

20. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) observed that the application of space technology could help bridge gulfs within societies and between countries and regions and contribute to the achievement of development objectives. The developing countries had to be fully engaged in the process, through sharing of experiences and non-discriminatory, affordable and timely access to state-of-the-art data. Pakistan itself would continue to share its expertise, especially with the developing countries. All States should also have equitable access to the geostationary orbit.

21. The establishment of UN-SPIDER and the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems demonstrated the international will to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The establishment of an atmospheric data receiving and processing centre in Pakistan by the end of 2008 would further support the UN-SPIDER core activities in which Pakistan had been participating.

22. Pakistan was a party to all five of the core United Nations treaties on outer space. It was deeply concerned over the possible militarization of space. It was also unfortunate that the bulk of space research was intended for military purposes and consequently a threat to security. There must be greater transparency in the space activities undertaken by various States; and those with significant space capabilities had a greater responsibility for preventing the militarization of outer space. While the negotiation of a comprehensive convention would contribute to preventing the weaponization of space, proper implementation of the existing agreements was essential in the interim.

23. The two policymaking bodies, COPUOS and the Conference on Disarmament, should be able to benefit from each other's work through proper channels of communication and coordination. The expertise of COPUOS in the scientific, technical and legal aspects of space issues would be especially useful to the Conference.

24. Pakistan's national space agency, the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), continued to make progress in projects of national importance, ranging from education to telemedicine, agriculture, irrigation, monitoring of watercourses and floods, national resource management, satellite meteorology and environmental surveying. Pakistan planned to replace its current leased communications satellite with a new one, PAKSAT-1R, by 2011, thus preserving its strategic orbital slot while augmenting the country's telecommunication infrastructure and helping it use satellite communication for socio-economic development. SUPARCO was also developing a remote-sensing satellite system of its own that could be applied to socio-economic development: the first of the series would be an optical imaging satellite to be launched in 2011, providing imagery for applications in agriculture, forestry, water and coastal resource management, mineral exploration, urban planning and national disaster monitoring and surveillance.

25. Because of the priority it gave to regional and international cooperation, Pakistan was working in the field of geo-informatics with countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and on global aerosol studies with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and it was providing geomagnetic data to various centres in Britain and the United States. His country had a satellite-based search-and-rescue system for use on air, sea and land. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/217, Pakistan planned to launch a space education and awareness programme, to promote the use of space technology and its applications in building a prosperous society.

26. **Mr. Ali** (Sudan) said that, in order for all of mankind to benefit, greater transparency in the exploitation of outer space was required of all spacefaring nations. As one of only a few developing countries endowed with plentiful natural resources, the Sudan supported all efforts aimed at building developing countries' capacities in the peaceful uses of outer space through greater international cooperation and increased training opportunities. In that connection, he hailed the convening of the second African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in Pretoria from 2 to 5 October 2008, and looked forward to the third conference, which was scheduled to be held in Algeria in 2009.

27. Developing countries needed to make greater use of remote sensing, Earth observation and early warning systems in order to be able to respond to natural disasters such as flood, drought and desertification. Outer space technology also had important uses in tele-education and telemedicine as well as the management of natural resources. His delegation supported the view expressed by COPUOS members

that the Working Group of the Whole should focus on the implementation of the following actions called for in the Plan of Action: maximizing the benefits of existing space capabilities for disaster management; maximizing the benefits of the use and applications of global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) to support sustainable development; and enhancing capacity-building in space-related activities.

28. He shared the concern of COPUOS that the financial resources available for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications remained limited, that the limited resources available to the United Nations should be focused on activities of the highest priority and that the Programme was a priority activity of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). He suggested that, in view of the important services it provided to developing countries, the Programme should be funded from the United Nations programme budget.

29. **Mr. Otepola** (Nigeria) said that his delegation welcomed the report of COPUOS and commended UNOOSA for its efforts in bringing the benefits of space technology to the international community, especially to developing nations. In the context of growing concern over food security, natural disasters, and poverty and hunger, his delegation attached the utmost importance to the view of COPUOS that applications developed through space research could help mitigate the consequences of food scarcity. The Office should work more closely with developed Member States to assist developing countries to build capacity in the deployment of such applications in support of sustainable development. Member States should contribute to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications to enhance the capacity of the Office for pilot projects, research and development, especially in developing countries. Doing so would contribute directly to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

30. Many developing countries could not meet the enormous cost of launching satellites into space. However, in order to apply space technology for the development of Africa in the spirit of the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Algeria, Nigeria and South Africa had signed a declaration of intent in June 2008 aimed at using space science and technology for monitoring and management of agriculture, the environment, housing and urban planning, borders, disasters, land use, land cover, water resources and human health. That effort was a direct attempt to ensure sustainable development for those countries and as such deserved the support of the international community.

31. The Office should intensify efforts to ensure that the activities and services of UN-SPIDER were widespread and readily available, especially in times of disaster. Welcoming the opening of regional programme offices in Germany and China, he called for the early establishment of subregional offices to serve as reference points for disaster management and emergency response. He also welcomed the programme of the Office of Outer Space Affairs, which outlined how it would work with the Commission on Sustainable Development for the thematic cluster 2008-2009, including with respect to the role of space in land use and rural development, preventing drought and combating desertification, and achieving sustainable development in Africa. He called on the Office to come up with specific and practical programmes that would contribute to the overall objectives of the Commission and generate a positive impact on the sustainable development aspirations of developing Member States.

32. **Mr. Mana** (Cameroon) said that his delegation welcomed the role of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in promoting cooperation with Member States at the regional and global levels in support of regional centres for space science and technology education affiliated with the United Nations. The emphasis on international cooperation in space weather forecasting and the use of remote sensing would contribute enormously to boosting food security in Africa. The benefits of space technology were also clear in the areas of disaster management and search and rescue operations. Accordingly, he welcomed the decision of COPUOS to consider a report on the activities of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue (COSPAS-SARSAT) annually and hailed the progress made in the implementation of the 10-year Implementation Plan of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). The GEOSS System had become more indispensable than ever in view of the worsening food and energy crises as well as of continuing or emerging pandemics. Finally, his delegation welcomed the progress made in the UN-SPIDER programme, and thanked all the countries that had provided generous extrabudgetary resources in support of that programme, as well as those that had announced additional contributions to it.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.